

THE 2023 U.S. SENATE UAP HEARING

By V.J. Ballester Olmos

On April 19, 2023, a Congressional hearing on UAP was held by the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities¹ of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services. The hearing was specifically aimed “on the mission, activities, oversight and budget of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office” [AARO], by its director Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick, who presented a statement for the record and replied to questions. It lasted 59 minutes.² Senator Mrs. Kirsten Gillibrand (Democrat for New York), chair of the Subcommittee, made an initial address which characterized this issue as “the very serious problem of unidentified anomalous phenomenon [*sic*].” In order to capture Mrs. Gillibrand’s perspective, and the nature of the pressure AARO may be feeling, it suffices to quote this sentence from her presentation: “...while we have made progress, there remains a stigma attached to this phenomenon, there is a vast and complex citizen engagement and there’s also very challenging scientific and technical hurdles.”

There’s that stigma mantra again. False! It was USAF Blue Book Project’s scientific consultant Professor J. Allen Hynek who described how ufology delivers an “embarrassment of riches.” Military UFO sightings, for example, have abounded since Day One back in 1947! It is quite obvious what this distinguished lady may have in mind. Dangerous expectations that may drive AARO’s investigation into unexpected paths. I will not tackle her other remarks, as she knows by hearsay or is clearly influenced by UFO believers, as when she describes UAP in these terms: “...we don’t know where they come from, who made them or how they operate.” This assumes there exists a single operator behind the “phenomenon”. False again! From that assumption the logical step is that it is being conducted by intelligence. And that it is alien. However, there is no such thing as a unique UFO phenomenon -there are as many sightings and experiences as observers. When sightings are not invented, they are conventional in origin and nature, apart from some unexplained events which are devoid of exact data.

Another of the obstinacies that Mrs. Gillibrand shares with hardcore ufologists is that AARO serves “as an open door for witnesses of UAP events or participants in government activities related to UAP to come forward securely and disclose what they know without fear of retribution for any possible violations of previously signed non-disclosure agreements. Congress mandated that AARO set up a publicly discoverable and accessible process for safe disclosure while we know that AARO has already conducted a significant a number of interviews many referred by Congress [this is, her and her pro-UFO colleagues] we need to set up a public process...” The band of politicians and ufologists behind pushing for UAP investigations clearly believe that (1) there are scores of military UFO witnesses with their mouth south for decades, and (2) that the U.S. Government has mounted devilish programs over the years to hide extraordinary UFO evidence. None of this is factual, and history will prove it -probably when those politicians are already collecting their pensions.

Mrs. Gillibrand was followed by Senator Ms. Joni Ernst (Republican for Iowa), Subcommittee Ranking Member, who posed a number of questions to Dr. Kirkpatrick who

pertinently responded to them before the session was declared closed. Ms. Ernst was more grounded, and was worried about “the full range of threats posed by our adversaries in all domains that is what the Joint Force needs to be prepared to fight and win in defense of our nation this committee needs to know about Chinese or Russian advanced technology programs to exploit our vulnerabilities and it needs to know whether your office along with the IC [Intelligence Community] has detected potential Chinese or Russian capabilities to surveil or attack us...” I cannot grasp the level of ingenuity of these people. A powerful country —the United States of America— is creating in 2022 a small office to study UFOs to assess the technological menaces from China or Russia? Naïve politicians!

Next, Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick made his opening statement.³ The purpose of this article is to highlight what, to my judgement, were the most significant remarks by Dr. Kirkpatrick and to make some comments about the facts and figures provided in his presentation.

Unidentified objects in any domain pose potential risks to safety and security, particularly for military personnel and capabilities.

This assertion must be proved. How do you compute aviation risk? One airmiss every 10 cases, every 100 cases, every 1000 cases? This is an affirmation that AARO will have to demonstrate with figures. Add this to the pending list.

Dr. Kirkpatrick emphasized that AARO is still a 9-month office (with ~40 experts working). In those nine months, he claimed to have given “important steps to improve UAP data collection, standardize the department’s UAP internal reporting requirements, and implement a framework for rigorous scientific and intelligence analysis, resolving cases in a systematic and prioritized manner. Meanwhile, consistent with legislative direction, AARO is also carefully reviewing and researching the U.S. Government’s UAP-related historical record.” That is good.



Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick.
Director, All-domain Anomaly
Resolution Office (AARO).
U.S. Department of Defense.

Now Dr. Kirkpatrick begs not to be too inundated and requests patience, when he says:

DoD fully appreciates the eagerness from many quarters, including here in Congress and in the American public, to quickly resolve every UAP encountered across the globe, from the distant past through today. [...] it will take time to realize the full mission. We cannot answer decades of questions about UAP all at once, but we must begin somewhere. While I assure you that AARO will follow scientific evidence wherever it leads, I ask for your patience as DoD first prioritizes the safety and security of our military personnel and installations, in all domains.

In exchange for patience to the impatient, radical UFO believers, he assures us that his investigation has no limits. Good negotiator!

And he proudly notices they can be the last resort in UFO investigation:

AARO is the culmination of decades of DoD, Intelligence Community, and congressionally-directed efforts to successfully resolve UAP encountered first and foremost by U.S. military personnel, specifically Navy and Air Force pilots.

Probably, but as long as there are people believing in aliens visiting the Earth there will be people believing that the U.S. Government occults the truth, and demanding a yearned-for disclosure.

Dr. Kirkpatrick cleverly advances that events can be solved, provided data are available (thus not acknowledging what has been the major fault of amateur ufology):

... UAP encountered first by highly capable DoD and IC platforms, featuring the nation's most advanced sensors, are those UAP most likely to be successfully resolved by my office assuming data can be collected. [Underlining is my emphasis.]

And he advises that this a complex job that requires multiple participation:

AARO's ultimate success will require partnerships with the interagency, industry, academia, the scientific community, and the public.

As I said elsewhere, it will take not only resources but also willingness to solve mysteries, with feet well on the ground and imagination secured.

In only nine months, Dr. Kirkpatrick has learned the framework of the problem and recognizes the need for other views when he states that:

The UAP challenge is more an operational and scientific issue than an intelligence issue. [...] Robust collaboration and peer-review across a broad range of partners will promote greater objectivity and transparency in the study of UAP.

But in order to realistically achieve this, he will have to realize that elementary event data must be explicit in the reports, otherwise external assistance and assessment is precluded. Transparency starts with oneself. It is illustrated by a case further below.

Dr. Kirkpatrick starts offering some preliminary conclusions:

I want to underscore today that only a very small percentage of UAP reports display signatures that could reasonably be described as 'anomalous.' The majority of unidentified objects reported to AARO demonstrate mundane characteristics of balloons, unmanned aerial systems, clutter, natural phenomena, or other readily explainable sources. While a large number of cases in our holdings remain technically unresolved, this is primarily due to a lack of data associated with these cases. Without sufficient data, we are unable to reach defensible conclusions that meet the high scientific standards we set for resolution, and I will not close a case that we cannot defend the conclusions of.

Be prepared, then, to see statistics with a high percent of reports in the “lack of information” column, in addition to a majority of attributed sightings. And, for the remaining cases, let us know if many had *proven* features defying currently known performances.

Now, Dr. Kirkpatrick gives us a first lesson in UAP-ufology 101, which we have been defending for decades. This was mainly devoted to believers and the impatient:

I recognize that this answer is unsatisfying to those who in good faith assume that what they see with their eyes, with their cameras, or with their radars is incontrovertible evidence of extraordinary characteristics and performance. Yet, time and again, with sufficient scientific-quality data, it is fact that UAP often, but not always, resolve into readily-explainable sources. Humans are subject to deception and illusions, sensors to unexpected responses and malfunctions, and in some cases intentional interference. Getting to the handful of cases that pass this level of scrutiny is the mission of AARO.

A fully accurate sentence that just needed nine months of work studying UFO cases. Let us see the standards of this “handful of cases” that allegedly pass this level of scrutiny, and to where they point.

The statement by AARO’s Director continues to remark that explained, non-exotic UAP reports can still be of national security concern. Yes, but I think that will be an intelligence or counterintelligence matter, and not his, or as he defined later in his replies, a case of SEP, “somebody else’s problem.”

Back on the difficult cases, Dr. Kirkpatrick affirms that:

...for the few cases in all domains that do demonstrate potentially anomalous characteristics, AARO exists to [...] resolve those anomalous cases. In doing so, AARO is approaching these cases with the highest level of objectivity and

analytic rigor. This includes physically testing and employing modeling and simulation to validate our analyses and underlying theories, then peer reviewing the results within the U.S. Government, industry partners, and with appropriately-cleared academic institutions before reaching any conclusions.

OK - resolution is the key word. And solving 100% of fully documented events will have to be their target for success. The application of top scientific rigor is precisely what this job calls for. Still, I observe some “fantasy bites” here by mentioning that theories may need simulation and modelling, when finally, they will find a near-infinite matrix of misperceptions and misinterpretations as the cause of these phenomena. Perhaps this is just paying for lip service?

He did not need to state this at this stage, but stating this right now leaves him in a good place (on second thoughts, he wants to say that before they ask him), but it is meritorious to vouchsafe this claim:

I should also state clearly for the record that in our research AARO has found no credible evidence thus far of extraterrestrial activity, off-world technology, or objects that defy the known laws of physics.

He adds “thus far” to leave a door open to people’s fascination ... and, of course, to several more years of funding.

Dr. Kirkpatrick advises:

For those few cases that have been leaked to the public previously, and subsequently commented on by the U.S. Government, I encourage those who hold alternative theories or views to submit your research to credible peer-reviewed scientific journals. AARO is working to do the same. That is how science works, not by blog or social media.

Not sure if he refers to skeptical critique or to positive endorsement for the “anomaly” content of any UAP event, or both. In any case, this would be the correct procedure, provided there would be scientific and technical journals willing to accept papers on UFOs or UAP. However, sometimes, researchers finding explanations to UAP incidents may not be willing to make the effort to formalize their informal scientific evaluations (released in blogs and websites) to the level of formal papers, among other things, because there are so many cases studied! At the same time, AARO should have a mailbox open to receive informal input from researchers.

Dr. Kirkpatrick adds:

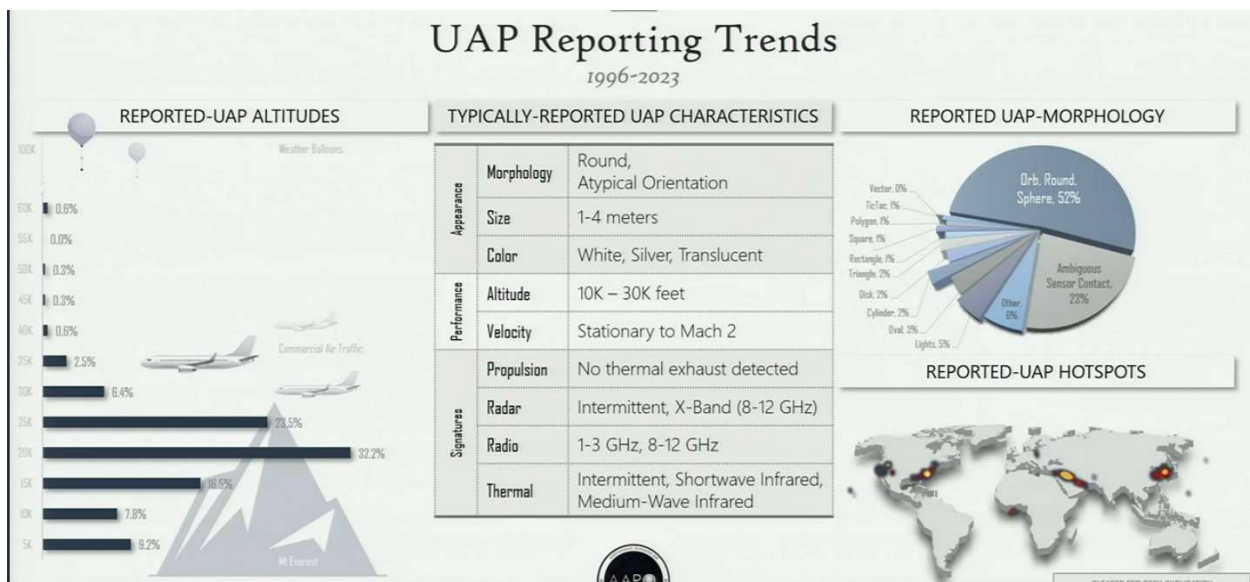
By its very nature, the UAP challenge has for decades lent itself to mystery, sensationalism, and even conspiracy. For that reason, AARO remains committed to transparency, accountability, and to sharing as much with the American public...

Rational thinking, certainly. It is good that he declares he is aware of the sensationalism and conspiracy essence of ufology. Now we know he knows. And that will help to guide his UAP research. Again, he requests time and explains that accurate investigation is a long process:

However, AARO's work will take time if we are committed to doing it right. It means adhering to the scientific method and the highest standards of research integrity. It means being methodical and scrupulous. It means withholding judgment in favor of evidence. It means following the data where it leads, wherever it leads. It means establishing scientific, peer reviewed theoretical underpinnings of observed data. AARO is committed to those standards.

Excellent public commitments. We could not agree more.

Before turning to the question period, Dr. Kirkpatrick walked the audience through some “high-integrity analysis” transparencies. The following chart represents the trend analysis of all the cases in AARO holdings to date.



The histogram on the left shows all reported cases as a function of altitude:

Most of our sightings occur in the 15 to 25000 foot range and that is ultimately because that's where a lot of our aircraft are.

Which is consistent with the fact that most observations are airborne. Do not forget that the 2022 AARO annual report indicated that over 50% of cases were identified as balloons.⁴ That is reinforced now: according to this slide, the “robot portrait” of a UAP is a round object of size 1 to 4 meters, translucent or white. Impressive-looking spacecraft!

Regarding other variables like performance and signatures, AARO must learn not to mix apples with pears, and separate statistics by type of attributed phenomenon. For

example, how much do the reported features of attributed objects (i.e. balloons or drones) differ from those of non-attributed objects (UAP)? There is no such thing as “typical characteristics” when you study UFOs. Consider a zoo with giraffes, ostriches, and chimps -what is the average or typical animal? A long-necked furry biped: a creature that does not exist. With regard to radio frequency emissions, for instance: would not objects transmitting radio frequencies be of human manufacture? The 1-3GHz is part of the UHF band, with very varied applications, including aeronautical communications. As far as thermal signature, medium and short-wave infrared radiation is related to any temperature over environmental temperature, like aircraft nozzle, flares... or Chinese lanterns. I hope the next set of AARO statistics show higher sophistication, focused centrally on discriminated data.

Next, Kirkpatrick presented slides of “two cases that we've declassified recently.” And even more curious to recognize as a supposedly representative and typically anomalous UAP event the 16-sec footage from a drone’s camera, taken on 2022 in an undisclosed location in the “Middle East,” with basic data erased from the released video.⁵ I would have expected to see truly unexplainable images defying state-of-the-art aviation. Or at least an event from the fields of Texas! Will we have to wait for the next hearing?



Three frames of the video clip showing the flying spherical object.



Enlargements of the object.

This is an MQ-9 drone showing the passage of an apparent spherical object captured by electro-optical sensors (not IR). “You’ll see it come through the top of the screen, there it goes and then the camera will slew to follow it you’ll see it pop in and out of the [...] field of view there,” Kirkpatrick explains. And he continues:

This is essentially all of the data we have associated with this event from some years ago. It is going to be virtually impossible to fully identify that just based off of that video. Now what we can do and what we are doing is keeping that as part of that group of 52 percent [above chart, full percentage for globe-shaped objects] to see what are the similarities -what are the trends across all of these. Do we see these in a particular distribution? Do they all behave the same or not? As we get more data we will be able to go back and look at these in a fuller context.

Probably it is impossible to identify the origin of this object but probably it is possible to determine its nature, with the data at hand. Without access to the actual data, I have requested some investigators specializing in case analysis to provide some research entry. And this is what they have found out.

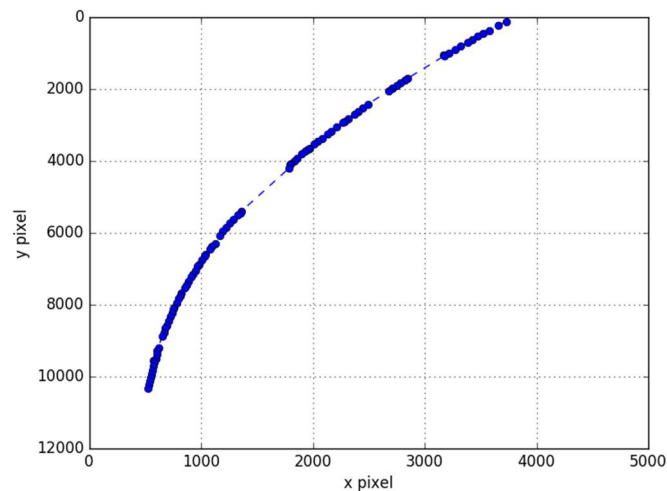
According to the high-resolution footage contributed by The Black Vault, the date was July 12, 2022 and time was 21:56Z. Assuming that the North indicator is correct, the shadows in the video show that the illumination is coming from the ESE. It is estimated the elevation of the light source to be between 50° and 60° (shadows are nearly horizontal and almost as long as the objects that cast them). With the Moon indeed much lower in the sky and in the SSW or SW at that day and hour, therefore the time mentioned must be wrong. A well-educated guess is that the time was closer to 9:56 a.m., local time (6:56Z). At that time, the Sun would have been in the right place for, say, Mosul, Iraq, location where a similar ‘orb’ was imaged in April 2016.⁶

Assuming the drone’s flight level is 7.6 km (the MQ-9 operational height),⁷ and considering that, if it were on the ground, the size of the UAP would be approximately 50 cm (using people around as a reference), the actual size of the object can be calculated by multiplying this value by the factor $[1 - (\text{object's height})/(\text{drone's height})]$. For example:

<u>Estimated UAP height</u>	<u>Calculation</u>	<u>Real UAP size</u>
5.7 km (3/4 of 7.6 km)	$50 \times [1-(5.7/7.6)]$	12.5 cm
3.8 km (1/2 of 7.6 km)	$50 \times [1-(3.8/7.6)]$	25.0 cm
1.9 km (1/4 of 7.6 km)	$50 \times [1-(1.9/7.6)]$	37.5 cm

That is, the size of a toy foil balloon, or a military decoy balloon. The simple nature of the object and/or its height would be consistent with the lack of reaction and alarm by the people walking right below the object's passing. Not a "metallic orb" as described by AARO.

From the following image composition, the pixel position of the object can be extracted to recreate the apparent trajectory as seen by the drone. The drone seems to be banking slightly to the left and, at the end of the video, the object tends to move more in "vertical" (i.e., elevation with respect to the drone) than "sideways" (i.e. azimuth). It would mean that the drone and the UAP are more or less aligned by then. The electro optical device could be a WESCAM MX-20.⁸ This device has different fields of view from 1.07° to 0.13° for the daylight spotter, depending on the zoom and resolution of the video. A simple flight model could be built assuming a straight trajectory for the object, and a circular motion for the drone. Unfortunately, lack of information on heading, velocity and height of the drone (deleted in the video) prevents us to test a flight model and extracting values as object's velocity and heading.



July 12, 2022, Middle East: Trajectory plot, by Julio Plaza del Olmo.⁹
 (Note that the X and Y axis have different spans to better appreciate the curved trajectory.)

The next slide presented by Dr. Kirkpatrick was a South Asia incident of images from a drone that seemed initially strange, and was finally resolved as a commercial aircraft. Not a surprise considering that most of UAP sightings can be explained at first sight. But it documents the fact, many times ignored by believers, that UAP research requires a technical investigation, not simply trusting the witness's word.

Mrs. Gillibrand then posed a question about the number of reports and how many were identified. Here we have the present figure:

As of this week we are tracking over a total of 650 cases.

650 UAP reports (occurred from 1996 to 2023), or 140 reports up from the 2022 annual report released on January 2013 for cases with a cut-off date of August 30, 2022.

Dr. Kirkpatrick went on to describe AARO's five-step screening process. Importantly, he announced plans to share information:

Once we have an approved web portal to hang the unclassified stuff we will downgrade and declassify things and put it out there. In the meantime we're putting a lot of these on our classified web portal where we can then collaborate with the rest of the community so they can see what's going on.

On quality data, he added:

Of those over 650 you know we've prioritized, about half of them to be of anomalous interesting value and now we have to go through those and go how much do I have actual data for.

Dr. Kirkpatrick gave advance notice on the next AARO reporting schedule, as follows:

Go back to your question ma'am, we have this next quarterly report will be coming out here pretty soon. Our next annual report you all have given us moved it up to June, July we're going to be having that done about that time frame and we will be combining a whole number of reports into that one. I think we're currently sitting at [...] about halfway through that analytic process.

And naturally he took the opportunity to ask for more resources:

...we're going to get faster as we get more people on board and we get more of the community tools to automate some of the analysis that has to be done.

Ms. Ernst naively questioned if AARO was aware "of any Chinese or Russian technical advancements to surveil or attack U.S interests," as if such an interrogation might be answered in public, even if known. Dr Kirkpatrick politely qualified it as a "great question," and continued:

Part of what we have to do as we go through these, especially the ones that show signatures of advanced technical capabilities is determine if there's a foreign nexus. That's really hard if what we observe doesn't have a Chinese or Russian flag on the side of it. Now I think it is prudent to say of the cases that are showing [...] some sort of advanced technical signature of which we're talking, single percentages of the entire population of cases we have [...], I have indicators that some are related to foreign capabilities.

Of course, those are not UAP (UFOs) anymore and, upon being handed off to the appropriate Intelligence Community agency they immediately become an SEP, or “somebody else's problem.” Ms. Ernst insisted on Russian or Chinese threats and Dr. Kirkpatrick affirmed, based on his past experience as a Science and Technical intelligence officer:

[...] they [adversaries, particularly China] are less risk-averse at technical advancement than we are [...] Are there capabilities that could be employed against us in both an ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] and a weapons fashion? Absolutely. Do I have evidence that they're doing it in these cases? No, but I have concerning indicators.

I am quite interested to see detailed statistics on UAP reports collected by AARO. I think that the number of advanced signatures vehicles from foreign countries will be a bare minimum. The highest number of attributed cases will probably belong to the most usual, conventional causes.

Senator Ms. Jacky Rosen (Democrat, Nevada) next talked about the impact of UAP on aviation safety, especially worrying about Nevada's USAF service men (this is, attracting votes). She said the U.S. Navy had officially acknowledged 11 near misses involving UAP between 2004 and 2021 that required pilot action. This is another subject that has been overmagnified to serve as justification to the mere UAP study. Because we do not have access to the reports concerned, it is not possible to assess their real importance. Undisclosed data is not data at all.

That was for Dr. Kirkpatrick another “great question”. Apparently concerned with this issue he stated that:

[there is] a bunch of new requirements that we're issuing through the Joint Staff [...] the first thing that we're doing is standardizing our reporting and the requirements associated with that guidance [...] I think it goes out maybe this week maybe next week on that we've been working with them for some months...

To prevent air accidents is one thing, another is to elevate this to the category of artificial alarm. In a few years from now, we will see the balance and results of this operation.

Ms. Rosen asked a question on the Chinese balloon recently shot down by an expensive *Sidewinder* missile and how a sustainable affordable response can be developed in case of flagrant violations of the airspace by UAP. Basic response elements follow:

[...] there's an authority issue with the owners [and] operators of those ranges that they need to work through and we're working that with Joint Staff [...] there are non-kinetic options to engage pretty much everything right whether it's electronic warfare, whether it's laser technology [...] we will inform recommendations back to the Department [of Defense] [...]

This was followed by comments by Dr. Kirkpatrick in the wake of Mrs. Gillibrand's question on internal subordination and reporting logistics, and how this reporting structure could be improved in the next Defense Bill.

Mrs. Gillibrand was also interested to know the progress on AARO's mandate to establish "an accessible electronic method for potential witnesses of UAP incidents and potential participants in government UAP related activities to contact your office and tell their stories." The sharp dialogue that took place was as follows:

I have, we submitted the first version of that before Christmas

Mrs. Gillibrand: "Do you have an estimate from them when they will respond and when you'll have feedback on that?"

No, I don't.

Mrs. Gillibrand: "Okay, we will author a letter asking for that timely response to your superiors. When do you expect that you will establish a public-facing discoverable, an access portal for people to use to contact your office as the law requires?"

I would like to first say thank you all very much for referring the witnesses that you have thus far to us. I appreciate that we've brought in nearly two dozen so far it's been it's been very helpful. I'd ask that you continue to do that until we have an approved plan. what I would ask though is as you all continue to refer to us and refer witnesses to us I'd appreciate if you do that please try to prioritize the ones that you want to do because we do have a small research staff dealing with that. Thank you.



Mrs. Kirsten Gillibrand. Chair, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. U.S. Senate.

Mrs. Gillibrand: “Do you have any plans for public engagement that you want to share, now that you think it’s important that the public knows what the plan is?”

So we have a number of public engagement recommendations according to our strategic plan. All of those have been submitted for approval. They have to be approved by USD INS [Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security], [we] are waiting for approval to go do that.

Mrs. Gillibrand: “Okay. I will follow up on that.”

“Thanks, but no thanks” is what I read between lines when acknowledging the transmission of external witness information from senators and their sources. My impression is that AARO understandably prefers to have a stable database with reliable observers than a package of old, uncontrolled UFO reports. I know certain sources are feeding UFO events from their favorite (i.e., strongly biased) selection. I also think Dr. Kirkpatrick does not want it to become a circus, at least not a circus out of control.

The last question by Chair Gillibrand invoked the recent Chinese-and-other-balloons crisis and she blurted: “Do you agree that the public perception is generally that you and your office did not appear to play a major role in the Department’s response to the detection of objects over North America? What can you tell us that’s going on behind the scenes from your perspective?”

[...] beyond that, the response I would have to refer you back to the White House for the decision on how they did the response. We did not play a role in what you would respond other than that initial um you know advice on what we are seeing and how we are seeing it.

This was an undiplomatic, impertinent question, one that was based on an alleged public perception: an opinion poll?, Fox News?, Ufologists United? Who said that?

The next query was by Ms. Ernst who wanted assurance that this office is “not duplicating or replicating existing functions and creating redundancy within DoD and the interagency.” In brief: is “your particular office and function unique?” For Dr. Kirkpatrick that was another “great question”. His response was a great response indeed:

[...] the vision is: at one point at some point in the future you should not need an AARO. If I’m successful in what I’m doing, we should be able to normalize everything that we’re doing into existing processes, functions, agencies, and organizations and make that part of their mission and their role. Right now the niche that we form is really going after the unknowns [...], I think you articulated it early on, this is a hunt mission for what might somebody be doing in our backyard that we don’t know. That is what we are doing, right, but at some point we should be able to normalize that, that’s why it’s so important the work we’re doing with Joint Staff to normalize that into pilot DoD policy and guidance we are bringing in all of our interagency partners, so NASA is providing a liaison for us, I have FBI

liaison, I have OSI liaison, I have service liaisons, half of my staff come from the IC, half of my staff come from other scientific and technical backgrounds. I have DoE and so what we're trying to do is ensure again as I make UAP into SEP [somebody else's problem], they get handed off to the people that that is their mission to go do so that we aren't duplicating that. I'm not going to go chase the Chinese high altitude balloon, for example, that's not my job it's not an unknown and it's not anomalous anymore now it goes over to them.

Yeah, this is a good rationale. But what about if there is not a single problem to transfer to another agency? How about if unidentified anomalous phenomena are hardly a cluster of identified, conventional objects and events like misinterpretations of balloons, aircraft, birds, clutter, atmospheric freaks, astronomical bodies, satellites, missiles, etc.? This is, simple observation errors, sometimes augmented by psychological motivation. To which DoD agency will you transfer it? By definition, there will always be such misidentifications and bona fide perplexity. *Errare humanum est*. Someone, sometime will have to declare that there are not unknowns except for ill-documented reports that are evidence of nothing.

Mrs. Gillibrand then vouched the speculation that “DoD sets filters on certain sensors to eliminate objects that are moving really fast or slow because what we are looking for militarily are conventional aircraft and missiles. UAP that doesn't fit into these programs would thereby be weeded out and never noticed.” She wanted to make sure the raw data is being captured and subsequently processed by AARO: is AARO going to pay for it?

Dr. Kirkpatrick's response was theoretical, how could it be otherwise?:

One of the key tenets that we're trying to do in our science plan is understand what those signatures are, so we get all the raw, for example, radar data prior to the scrubbing and filtering to allow it to enter into our weapon systems and our detection systems. We are now taking all that data and cross-correlating it to what pilots are saying they're seeing or other observations from other operators. What that allows us to do is then see if there are any signatures in that data that I can pull out generate uh what we'll call automatic target recognition algorithms that allow us to then use that signature associated with a [sic] observed UAP - whatever that UAP may be. We will then make those recommendations of what those changes should be back to the Department [of Defense], so the Deputy Secretary had asked me last October to make those recommendations what changes do we need to make to radars, to uh platforms, to detection systems and algorithms to pull on those algorithms make those changes. That's going to take some time that's where the research and development comes in, right, it's not it's not instantaneous. Right now a lot of the (I won't say uh you know) the things that fall outside of the ranges of those filters have been identified by people in the loop and you can't have people in the loop all the time, you know it's just not cost effective, so part of our budget is working through what [...] does that look like and then making those recommendations back to the big program offices for them to put into changes in the acquisition.

As I said previously, they believe they can find the proper UAP's license plate through those AI-related "automated target recognition algorithms", but that will not happen. They will be able to recognize instantly, yes, civil airplanes, military aircraft, advanced weapons, balloons, missiles, bolides, planets, birds, but nothing different. AARO will not isolate a specific signature for the typical unknown UAP, because there is no such thing. They will have to learn that there is not a set of UAP parameters but as many as different types of misinterpreted flying objects. The methodology is perfect, and it is that screening what we have been proposing and developing since the 1960s. Here I am just anticipating the results.

Lastly, a double question by Lady Chair was about the intervention of the academic community in the UAP study, and the interaction with NASA's own UAP study. This gave Dr. Kirkpatrick the (prepared beforehand) opportunity to be somewhat presumptuous when attempting to correct Dr. Carl Sagan when he affirmed:

In 1979, Carl Sagan said "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." I would go one step further and I would say extraordinary claims require not only extraordinary evidence but extraordinary science, and so how do you do that? You do that with the scientific method, right, so as AARO is developing and implementing its science plan it has to do so grounded in a solid foundation of scientific theory across the entire range of hypotheses that have been presented for what UAP are. That range spans adversary breakthrough technology, on one hand, known objects and phenomena in the middle, all the way to the extreme theories of extraterrestrials.

He knows he is making history, yet I trust to be wrong with my impression that he is willing to enter the territory of discussion with skepticism. I would advise him not to. He is not tasked to philosophize, but to find what is going on, its provenance and to do risk and intelligence analysis. In my view, if Dr. Kirkpatrick thinks that the UAP solution needs to pass through the finding of a new science, he is plainly wrong. I just hope this does not indicate that he holds preconceived ideas (his own, or what it is worse, planted by the surrounding UFO-alien ideologues).

He follows:

All of that has physics-based signatures associated with it, whether it's theoretical from the academic community, known from things like hypersonic weapons, or adversary breakthrough technologies, as we've talked about before, or the known objects that we have to go measure. [...] The academic community plays a very big role on the one end of the spectrum, the intelligence community on the other end of the spectrum, and then measurement in the middle. Once I have those signatures identified in validated peer-reviewed documents, then I have something to point to for all that data, because all that data is going to match one of those signatures [...]

Again, the conjecture or the false expectation that UAP signatures will be found. Badly advised. They will have to find out by themselves which is the only route to learning.

He continues:

Where NASA comes in and the study that they're doing which am uh supporting is really, looking at the unclassified data sources that might be used to augment our classified data sources to understand if there's a signature there we can pull on so very similar to the radars but civil capabilities, so, for example, we have a lot of climate science satellites, for example, that look at Earth, lots of them. How many of those is the data valuable in seeing these kinds of objects? The challenge in that is those platforms don't necessarily have the resolution you need so if you remember the slide I put up there with the trends the size of the objects we're looking for are typically reported to be one to four meters [...]

My only comment here is that I hope NASA is not searching for UAP in satellite camera recordings, because UAP sightings occur in the troposphere, maximum in the stratosphere.

Mrs. Gillibrand closed the session with Dr. Kirkpatrick's last words:

Thank you very much for allowing us to come and share a little bit of insight into what AARO is up to and what we're doing. I hope to be able to share a whole lot more in the future, um we have a lot of work to do so if you don't hear from me outside it's because we've got a lot of work to do.

Two times Dr. Kirkpatrick implored patience. He is right, UFO (UAP) research takes time to do accurately. Checking, data collection, and analysis, all these things take a lot of time. And all that glitters is not gold.

Dr. Kirkpatrick shows himself to be cautious, moderate, reasonable, trustworthy, and scientific. If this pattern continues, I expect a final, sensational finding: *everything is natural or manmade.*

Incidentally, in spite of the hearing's objective, during the session finally no indication about current or future budget figures was achieved. The only hint to funding was made during Mrs. Gillibrand's initial remarks: "...we added very substantial initial funding for the office but despite our best efforts the president's budget for fiscal [years] 23 and 24 requested only enough funding to defray the operating expenses of AARO. It included almost no funds to sustain the critical research and development..." I am really afraid of what they will do with plenty of money for research and development. I just hope it is not the same research and development as Bigelow Aerospace did for DIA's AAWSAP/AATIP 22 million dollars spent during 2008-2012.¹⁰



A view of the hearing.



Notes

(1) Responsibilities include policies and programs related to science and technology, special operations, intelligence, counterterrorism, security cooperation, strategic and information operations, countering weapons of mass destruction, and homeland defense. (<https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/subcommittees>)

(2) <https://youtu.be/gFmbMG6nKU4>

(3) <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/kirkpatrick-statement>

(4) V.J. Ballester Olmos and Julio Plaza del Olmo, “The 2022 Annual Report on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena, A Review,” https://www.academia.edu/95362778/The_2022_Annual_Report_on_Unidentified_Aerial_Phenomena_A_Review

(5) https://documents3.theblackvault.com/documents/dod/DOD_109584445-1920x1080-9000k.mp4

(6) Mick West, <https://www.metabunk.org/threads/mosul-sphere.12850/>

(7) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Atomics_MQ-9_Reaper

(8) <https://www.unmannedsystemstechnology.com/2020/03/eo-ir-targeting-system-integrated-into-mq-9-predator-uas/>

(9)

TIME	FRAME	X (PX)	Y (PX)	DISTANCE TRAVELLED (PX)	SPEED (PX PER FRAME)
7,07	212	3728	114	-	-
7,24	217	3659	230	134,97	26,99
7,41	222	3578	367	159,15	31,83
7,57	227	3525	449	97,64	19,53
7,74	232	3477	533	96,75	19,35
7,91	237	3424	622	103,59	20,72
8,07	242	3387	689	76,54	15,31
8,24	247	3323	805	132,48	26,50
8,41	252	3274	896	103,35	20,67
8,58	257	3216	1001	119,95	23,99
8,71	261	3169	1038	59,82	14,95
8,74	262	3178	1071	34,21	34,21
9,94	298	2847	1702	712,55	19,79
10,01	300	2825	1752	54,63	27,31
10,18	305	2786	1823	81,01	16,20
10,34	310	2751	1895	80,06	16,01
10,51	315	2709	1982	96,61	19,32
10,54	316	2707	1986	4,47	4,47
10,61	318	2682	2040	59,51	29,75
11,31	339	2494	2416	420,38	20,02
11,51	345	2448	2531	123,86	20,64
11,68	350	2409	2619	96,25	19,25
12,01	360	2373	2691	80,50	8,05
12,18	365	2319	2815	135,25	27,05
12,31	369	2282	2897	89,96	22,49
12,35	370	2269	2926	31,78	31,78
12,51	375	2214	3055	140,24	28,05
12,68	380	2166	3163	118,19	23,64
12,85	385	2128	3251	95,85	19,17
13,01	390	2083	3364	121,63	24,33
13,18	395	2046	3454	97,31	19,46
13,35	400	2014	3528	80,62	16,12
13,51	405	1972	3639	118,68	23,74
13,58	407	1959	3687	49,73	24,86
13,68	410	1933	3728	48,55	16,18
13,85	415	1902	3803	81,15	16,23
14,01	420	1862	3915	118,93	23,79
14,18	425	1835	3990	79,71	15,94
14,35	430	1800	4080	96,57	19,31
14,38	431	1796	4110	30,27	30,27

14,51	435	1790	4191	81,22	20,31
16,65	499	1362	5397	1279,70	20,00
16,68	500	1349	5441	45,88	45,88
17,02	510	1331	5496	57,87	5,79
17,18	515	1291	5630	139,84	27,97
17,35	520	1258	5727	102,46	20,49
17,52	525	1222	5862	139,72	27,94
17,68	530	1196	5955	96,57	19,31
17,85	535	1168	6072	120,30	24,06
18,22	546	1124	6297	229,26	20,84
18,35	550	1099	6363	70,58	17,64
18,52	555	1077	6462	101,41	20,28
18,69	560	1042	6597	139,46	27,89
18,85	565	1035	6638	41,59	8,32
19,02	570	1010	6754	118,66	23,73
19,19	575	984	6873	121,81	24,36
19,35	580	969	6932	60,88	12,18
19,59	587	948	7062	131,69	18,81
19,69	590	924	7152	93,15	31,05
19,85	595	909	7232	81,39	16,28
20,02	600	885	7355	125,32	25,06
20,22	606	869	7461	107,20	17,87
20,35	610	853	7531	71,81	17,95
20,52	615	826	7671	142,58	28,52
20,69	620	812	7752	82,20	16,44
20,85	625	802	7830	78,64	15,73
21,02	630	780	7952	123,97	24,79
21,19	635	760	8070	119,68	23,94
21,35	640	752	8132	62,51	12,50
21,55	646	742	8220	88,57	14,76
21,69	650	723	8332	113,60	28,40
21,86	655	708	8455	123,91	24,78
22,02	660	693	8574	119,94	23,99
22,19	665	678	8659	86,31	17,26
22,36	670	666	8763	104,69	20,94
22,52	675	650	8867	105,22	21,04
23,06	691	619	9202	336,43	21,03
23,19	695	608	9265	63,95	15,99
23,36	700	603	9371	106,12	21,22
23,52	705	595	9494	123,26	24,65
23,62	708	576	9538	47,93	15,98
23,69	710	582	9602	64,28	32,14
23,86	715	576	9704	102,18	20,44
24,02	720	567	9828	124,33	24,87
24,19	725	558	9913	85,48	17,10
24,36	730	549	10017	104,39	20,88
24,52	735	544	10124	107,12	21,42
24,69	740	534	10230	106,47	21,29
24,79	743	524	10314	84,59	28,20

(10) <https://irp.fas.org/dia/aatip-list.pdf>

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